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2001

Meeting NATO's Bio-Defense Challenges

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Recent Events

June 2001

6/01: Hosted Seminar, "Meeting NATO's Bio-Defense Challenges"

The CCC and the Naval Postgraduate School hosted a major event in June of 2001: a formal NATO seminar to help the Alliance's Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (DGP) meet NATO's Bio-Defense Challenges. The goal of this seminar - which was attended by over 100 people - was to promote a common understanding among NATO nations of the political and operational consequences posed by the threat or use of biological weapons (BW) against the Alliance, and the possible steps that could be taken to create a more coherent and effective Alliance approach to bio-defense.

Designed to build on the success of a NATO seminar in Budapest last summer, which also focused on bio-defense, the Monterey seminar brought together DGP representatives, their staffs, and other officials from NATO nations and NATO headquarters and groups to examine opportunities for improving NATO policy guidance, operational concepts and doctrine, military R&D and capabilities, and training and exercising to ensure that NATO forces can successfully deal with the threats posed by the proliferation and the possible threat or use of biological weapons.

The seminar was attended by DGP representatives from nearly all nineteen NATO nations and certain policy, intelligence, technical, and operational experts in capitals who are closely involved with the Alliance's work to counter the proliferation and possible use of weapons of mass destruction. CCC Director Peter Lavoy served as the conference coordinator.

A combination of four formats were used to achieve the seminar objectives:

- Initial presentations by NATO and non-NATO specialists to promote a common understanding of new developments and works in progress;
- Scenario-based discussions to help participants better understand the current preparedness of NATO forces to operate under BW conditions and the strategic and policy implications of various courses of action that the DGP might recommend following the seminar;
- Wrap-up presentations by key NATO group representatives on possible next steps; and
- Concluding discussion of next steps for the DGP and the Alliance as a whole.

With growing concern over the possibility of confronting potential adversaries armed with nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) weapons, many NATO nations have expressed interest in utilizing threat scenarios, or situation depictions, to help clarify the needs of NATO planners, programmers, and trainers of the forces who ultimately might confront NBC threats. The set of situation depictions developed for this seminar were intended to provide a broad framework to help NATO members assess defense requirements for dealing with adversaries that might use BW agents. They spanned a range of plausible BW threats in the 2002-2010 timeframe that could affect key NATO functions and capabilities. The goal was to provide a tool to help NATO nations, groups, and commands deepen their understanding of the implications of BW threats; assess the strengths and weaknesses in current and planned capabilities; and help identify improvements in capabilities, organization, planning, doctrine, and training to counter potential BW threats.

All participants agreed that the seminar was an enormous success. A classified seminar report is being prepared and disseminated by the CCC in coordination with NATO's WMD Centre. This report will be used by the DGP to enhance the Alliance's bio-defense effort in upcoming NATO meetings. For more information about this activity, contact:

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6/11/01: Hosted Lecture: Hal Rooks, "Security and Insecurity in the Persian Gulf"

Mr. Rooks, a leading U.S. analyst of Middle East security issues, provided an incisive survey of the daunting challenges the states of the Gulf cooperation council (GCC) face in trying to maintain domestic stability and national security in an increasingly dangerous Gulf region. Mr. Rooks highlighted the factors that made disaffected youth of the region turn to terrorism and set their sights on U.S. targets.

6/10/01: Hosted Lecture: James Russell, "Gulf Security and U.S. Strategy in the 21st Century"

Mr. Russell, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, provided his assessment of the security challenges facing the United States in the Gulf in the 21st century. He focused on the regional security architecture composed of the forward-deployed U.S. presence, access to host nation facilities, and regional engagement to build U.S.-coalition interoperability.